

The Last Jewish Sufi

The Life and Writings of Ariel Bension [1880-1932] On the 75th Anniversary of His Book "The Zohar in Moslem and Christian Spain" And of His Death

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Relations between the Islamic schools of *tasawwuf* and the Jewish mystical movement of *Kabbalah* have been discussed in numerous works, mainly by Jewish rather than Muslim commentators. The two phenomena were linked from early in the history of Islam as well as in the process of development of mainstream Jewish theology and *Kabbalah*. The historian of Judaism Paul B. Fenton, whose work is occasionally flawed and whose attitude toward Islam has proven ambivalent – like that of various Jewish scholars – nonetheless points out that the association of Sufism and Jewish mysticism attained such a high level that the 13th century Muslim Sufi Hasan Ibn Hud of Damascus led a group of Jewish students in studying the Judeo-Arabic classic by al-Hakim Musa ibn Maimun al-Qurtubi or Maimonides (1135-1204), *Dalalat al-Ha'inn* (*Moreh Nevuhim* or *Guide for the Perplexed*).^[1]

Ariel Bension, born in Jerusalem in 1880, and a rabbi serving before the first world war in Manastir, Macedonia, may be described as the last of the great Jewish Sufis. That is, he was the last of the Kabbalists who was also thoroughly learned in and sympathetic to *tasawwuf*, and who wrote with deep perception on outstanding Muslim Sufis, as well as on the Kabbalists influenced by Sufism. But the life of Rabbi Bension comprises elements that seem drawn from literature – and particularly from the classic Western author, Jorge Luis Borges – rather than from ordinary scholarship. The most important work of Rabbi Bension is *The Zohar in Moslem and Christian Spain*^[2] – written in English with its title referring to the preeminent classic of *Kabbalah*. *Zohar*, meaning "*Splendor*," is known in Arabic as *Kitab Al-Zawhar* or *Kitab Al-Zuhar*. It is a "religious novel" composed in Aramaic (aramijski jezik) in the 13th century C.E. Like many Sufi and Kabbalist works, *Zohar* is ascribed to a much earlier Jewish figure, Rabbi Simon ben Jochai of the 2nd century C.E., but we believe from linguistic evidence – Castilian loan-words and other Hispanic elements in the Aramaic of the text – that it was written in Spain by Rabbi Moshe Šem Tob [Musa of the Blessed Name] of León (1250-1305). The distinguished 20th century Spanish philosopher Miguel de Unamuno, in his prologue to the 1934 Madrid edition of Bension's work, compared the *Zohar* with the Castilian classic, *Don Quijote*, thus underscoring its fundamental literary character.^[3]

The brilliance of Rabbi Bension's commentary on the *Zohar* and its relationship to *tasawwuf* as well as to Christian spiritual traditions resulted in his election to the Royal Academy of History in Spain, and his book is cited in the bibliography of the most significant work of Jewish metaphysical historiography, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* by Gershom Scholem. Before publishing his book on the *Zohar*, Rabbi Bension issued a work in Hebrew in Germany in 1925, deploring the decline of *Kabbalah* as he perceived it. This text, according to a 2010 paper by Jonatan Meir, a professor at the Hebrew University of the Negev in Israel, had a major influence on Scholem, who shared Rabbi Bension's pessimistic view. ^[4]

My memory moves back to the year 1979, and my first trip to Paris. I knew little of *Kabbalah* then – little more than fragments. I was 31. It was November, cold, and one day sheltered in an American tourist trap, the Shakespeare & Co. bookshop on the left bank of the Seine. I was invited into the inner sanctum upstairs (and did not realize until later that it was infested with fleas). But a red-bound volume on a crowded shelf drew my attention: *The Zohar in Moslem and Christian Spain*, by Ariel Bension. I

close my eyes and watch my hand reach for the Bension book as I ask if it is for sale; it was, and it was my door to Jewish spirituality, as well as to the relationship of *Kabbalah* to Sufism. I followed the path laid out in Bension's book through Spain to the former territories of the Ottoman empire, and entered Sufism and Islam. The hand touching the red spine of the book in Paris marked the biggest turning point in my life.

Yet Rabbi Bension has dropped out of the common discourse on *Kabbalah*, and appears unknown today, probably because his despairing vision of the state of Kabbalah is unpopular. Even his extraordinary collection of Sephardic manuscripts, many of them from Morocco, lies neglected in a remote Canadian university library, in Edmonton, Alberta. Nevertheless, the *Descriptive Catalogue of the Bension Collection of Sephardic Manuscripts and Texts*, issued in Edmonton in 1979^[5], is an important resource for the study of Rabbi Bension, his life and his work.

Ariel Bension was born, according to an "Appreciation" included in the mentioned *Catalogue*, in 1880 in al-Quds (Jerusalem). He was the son of a mystical rabbi, Joshua Tsion Ha-Levi, who had been taken as a child to the holy land from Fez in Morocco. His family traced their legacy, known among Jews as *jihus*, to the Barcelona Jewish family of Ben Hasdai, which was especially prominent in the 12th century. Rabbi Joshua Tsion belonged to a metaphysical school in Jerusalem called the Holy Community of the House of the Lord (Beth-El). The Judeo-Spanish dialect of Castilian was imbibed as one of Ariel Bension's mother tongues, along with Hebrew and Arabic.

Bension's own description of the Beth-El environment in which he was raised expresses the close practical resemblance between Kabbalistic and Sufi study. The circle of devotees was, at first, small and loose, but with the passage of time and the appearance of gifted teachers, it became a leading body of coordinated scholars, with authority and power. As followers of the "founder" of the second major school of *Kabbalah*, centered in Palestine and inspired by Rabbi Ishaq Luria (1544-72), Beth-El, in Bension's words, prayed "with *kawwanot* – inner meditation" – which we may compare to the "silent *dhikr*" in *tasawwuf*.

Bension stated that the use of melodies to accompany meditation in *Kabbalah* began at Beth-El. He writes, "At first it had been the custom to carry on meditation in a deep silence – the meditation on a single word, sometimes lasting for 15 minutes. But with the introduction of musical interludes *kawwanot* began to be performed during the intoning of a melody that was at the same time suggestive of the form which the meditation was to take. So true are these tunes in searching out and expressing the emotions of souls dwelling on the mystic meaning of the prayer, that even the listener, uninitiated though he may be, feels himself transported into the realms of thought, where dwell those who commune with the Infinite."^[6]

The disciples of Beth-El published books with names redolent of Sufism: *The River of Perfection*, *The Perfume of Joy*, and *The Words of Greeting*.

Ariel Bension was educated according to religious tradition, in the commentaries of the Talmud, in Jewish religious law or *halakhah*, and in *Kabbalah*. He then went to stay with relatives of his father in Algeria, before attending universities in Germany and Switzerland, where he was the first Middle Eastern Sephardic Jew to have studied. He received his doctorate in Semitic languages at the University of Bern, then returned to al-Quds where he married.

According to the "Appreciation," Bension spent a year before the beginning of the first world war as a rabbi in Manastir. The Macedonian city had been, until that time, one of the most progressive in the western Ottoman empire. Its Turkish, Albanian, Sephardic, Slavic Macedonian, and Romano-Vlach (Cincar) residents had long enjoyed economic prosperity, and the European powers were pleased to locate consulates in the town. The advanced reputation of Manastir was reflected in the decision of leading Albanian authors to organize in the city the most important event in 20th century Albanian intellectual history, the Manastir Linguistic Congress of 1908. Participants included the Muslim Mithat Frashëri and the Catholics Luigj Gurakuqi, Ndre Mjeda and Gjergj Fishta – the last who had studied in Sarajevo and was a friend of Silvije Strahimir Kranjčević – as well as Albanian Orthodox representatives.^[7]

Muslims and Jews enjoyed a special friendship in Manastir, such that in 1958, a Jewish author in New York, Leonard Plotnik, described the Manastirlis among the Sephardic immigrants of New York City, as "consider[ing] Islam a sister religion rather than an enemy. In Manastir, Jewish communal leaders were invited to Friday evening services in the mosques and [*tekije*], and they found no religious reason for not attending." Plotnik concludes by noting that the Manastirli Jews had incorporated into their religious services "music of Turkish origin, freely adapted from the songs of the [*tekije*] where the high-ranking Jewish officials of the old Sultans went on Friday nights to pay their respects to Moslem colleagues." The parallel with Bension's description of Kabbalistic practice at Beth-El is obvious.^[8] Bension, however, was notably partial to Arab Sufism, as exemplified by Muhyid'din Ibn Arabi, and indifferent to Turkish Sufism. This attitude of Bension reflected Sephardic idealization of Muslim Spain and the Maghreb, perhaps aggravated by Palestinian Arab and indigenous Balkan hostility to the Ottoman authorities of the time.

It is recorded in a volume on Sephardic history in Macedonia that Bension was appointed Chief Rabbi of Manastir and that he was then praised by the Chief Rabbi of the Ashkenazi Jews of Beograd, Yitzchak Hakohen Schlang, as "one of the most perfect Sephardic sages" because of his Maghrebi background and European education.^[9] The same account states that Muslim authorities in the town employed Jews as butchers of *halal* meat, protected the Jews by avoiding establishment of Saturday, the Hebrew Sabbath, as a market day, and were viewed as guardians of the Jews against Christian depredations.

According to a more thorough and authoritative account of the Jewish history of Manastir – in which Rabbi Bension is inexplicably and unfortunately unmentioned – the city, including its Jews, suffered an irreversible disaster with its conquest by the Serbs in mid-1913. Serb rule stimulated many Jews to flee Manastir for America and other sanctuaries. This appears to be the moment when Rabbi Bension went to Manastir, possibly on a relief mission. The American Jewish historian of Manastirli Jews, Mark Cohen, writes with an attitude of sharp criticism that the Serbian invaders looted Jewish and other businesses, and that "random acts of violence on the part of Serbian soldiers added to the insecurity."^[10] Further, as described by Cohen, Serbia, unlike the Ottomans before the reforms of 1908-09, demanded that Jews serve in their army. Cohen frankly admits that Beograd sought to "Serbianize" Macedonia, after renaming it "Stara Srbija." Bulgarians were expelled, Muslims were killed and their villages burned, and Serbian settlers began immigrating to the region.

The Jews of Beograd, who were mainly Sephardim led by the distinguished Rabbi Ishaq Alkalay, attempted to absorb the Manastirli Jews into the Serbian Jewish community. The Sephardim of Beograd had been assimilated into Serbian culture and many had abandoned their Judeo-Spanish linguistic habits, while the Manastirlis still spoke Spanish. The Beograd Sephardim had even Slavicized their names. A minor detail included in Cohen's work, but illustrative of Jewish identity in Macedonia, is that the Sephardim, like the Turks and Albanians, pronounced the name of the town as Manastir, although it is represented in contemporary Western Jewish documentation as Monastir.

The new administration further attempted to submit Jewish religious and secular education to control by the Serbian school system. Cohen frankly identifies this as a "'Serbia for the Serbs' agenda" and states that the attempt by the Beograd rabbis and their royal Serbian patrons failed: "Monastir's Jews did not embrace a Serbian identity." It was to such a place that the mystical rabbi Bension had gone, at a moment when the Manastirli Jews, who had always been welcome in the Sufi *tekije*, were making their first preparations to abandon the town.

The Manastirlis continued speaking Spanish after their arrival in America. In 1976, some three years before discovering Bension's book in Paris, and as described in my book *Sarajevska Ruža*, which was published in the Bosniak language in 2006,^[11] I began an inquiry into the survival of Sephardic traditions in the Balkans. One of the first scholarly studies I examined was a survey of the Manastirli dialect of Spanish collected in the town during the late 1920s by an important linguist, Max A. Luria^[12], i.e. while Bension was completing his book on the *Zohar*. As late as 1927, 10 percent of Manastir's population of 30,000 remained Jewish. According to the linguist's testimony, Jews and Muslims alike still wore the fez, while Romano-Vlach (Cincar) shepherds, Albanians, Bulgarians and Greeks were also visibly present in the city.

Manastir had, in the aftermath of the expulsion of Jews from Spain, attracted Sephardim from the eastern Iberian realm of Aragón as well as from Portugal. It was a place of residence of Solomon Molcho, a forced convert to Christianity born in Portugal in 1500, who returned to Judaism, adopted a radical interpretation of *Kabbalah*, and declared himself to be *moshiach* or the Jewish *mahdi*. He composed a book titled *Sefer Ha-Mefoar* or *The Sublime Book*, in 1528. Molcho went to Manastir, according to Luria, because "it was small, isolated, and far removed from seaports." Molcho would have better remained in Manastir. He later traveled to Italy and Germany where he made elaborate representations to Christian rulers, and was burned to death by the Catholic authorities in Mantua, Italy, in 1532, after rejecting a reconversion to the Christian faith.^[13]

A decade after the end of the first world war Max Luria, the linguistic researcher, recorded in the Spanish of the Manastirli Sephardim 120 Turkish loan-words, among them *namas* for prayer [*namaz*], which appears rare in the Sephardic vocabulary, as well as the commoner borrowings. The latter comprised such words as *aman* or *fildžan*. But Manastirli Spanish also included a remarkable epithet for a beautiful woman: *dunja*, derived from *dunja guzelli*, meaning "more beautiful than the world."^[14] Slavic loan-words counted only ten, referring to imported features of Serbian life, such as *vladika*^[15], and Max Luria theorized a Greek origin for the exclamatory *bre*, which appears in Serbian and in the Kosovo dialect of Albanian as well as Judeo-Spanish.^[16] The Manastirli resisted Serbization to the end, but those who remained there were completely wiped out in the Holocaust of the Jews, through the collaboration of Bulgarian occupation forces in Macedonia with the Germans.^[17] As noted in my *Sarajevska Ruža*, a handful of Macedonian Sephardim were saved by Muslim Albanians.

Rabbi Bension did not live to experience the Holocaust. He produced varied writings, but his volume on the *Zohar*, Sufism, and Christian mysticism is his masterwork, completed in Cairo in January 1931. Sadly, he died at the end of its year of publication, in November 1932, seventy-five years ago. He was survived by his second wife, a Canadian woman, and two daughters from a first marriage. After forty years, his slight Canadian connection resulted in the deposit of his collection of manuscripts at a Canadian university.

Although the topic of Bension's volume was Spanish, the sense of his study was derived from the eastern Mediterranean. It mainly comprises an abbreviated version of *Zohar*. The whole text of the *Zohar* consists of 2,000 printed pages. In an introduction to Bension, Sir Denison Ross, then-director of the School of Oriental Studies at the University of London, credits Bension as "the first writer to deal with the influence on Jewish mysticism of certain characteristics which underlie so much of the literature produced in Spain both by Christians and Muslims." In this, Bension precedes the pioneering studies of Scholem, as well as of such later Jewish scholars as Moshe Idel,^[18] no less than of Fenton.

Bension was deeply inspired by the classic Sufi writer, *Shejh ul-Aqbar Muhjed'din* Ibn Arabi (1165-1240), whose influence on the Italian poet Dante Alighieri was established by Bension's contemporary, the Spanish Catholic scholar Miguel Asín Palacios (1871-1944), and reviewed by the Bosnian Sephardic writer Kalmi Baruh (1896-1945).^[19] Bension was acquainted with the *Tarjuman al-Ashwaq* of Ibn Arabi as printed in Beirut in 1312 A.H., and the *Futuhāt al-Makkiyya* in its letterpress Cairo edition of 1329 A.H. But he also knew the works of Ibn Hazm and Abubekr Ibn Tufayl in Arabic.

Bension declares that Ibn Arabi and the author of *Zohar* share the conception that God is light. He cites with approval the *hadith qudsi* of Nabi Muhammad Rasulallah *sallallahualeyhisalem*, which says of God: "*I was a hidden treasure, and I desired to be known, and I created the World that I might be known.*"^[20] Muhammad *sallallahualeyhisalem* described this as an answer by God to a question by the Jewish ruler and poet, Daud, who asked why the world was brought into existence.^[21] Bension further quotes Ibn Arabi: "God cannot be recognized except through the unity of opposites. For God is the First and God is the Last. God is the Innermost and God is the Outermost. God is the Speaker and God is the Hearer."^[22] He also cites from Ibn Arabi "Divine Goodness produces the light of existence in every atom that *is*, without separating the form conceived by God, from God the Most High."^[23]

The Jewish commentator praises *Shejh ul-Aqbar* in extraordinary terms: Ibn Arabi, according to Bension, possessed a "crucible of... poetic imagination," in which he "recreated" and evoked "an artistic description" of the world to come, "far superior and far more beautiful than anything that had

been conceived up to his time."[\[24\]](#) Bension went on to include in his text an extensive description by Ibn Arabi of paradise. He celebrates Ibn Arabi for elaborating the "definite method for arriving at a state of intuition when it is desired to attain visions and divine revelation."[\[25\]](#) In his supreme invocation of the Spanish Muslim mystic, Bension equates the *Tarjuman al-Ashwaq* with the *Shir ha-Shirim* or *Song of Songs*, the summit of Jewish mystical study.[\[26\]](#)

Annex: Islam, Kabbalah, and Anthropomorphism -- The Dubrovnik Encounter

Study of the Palestinian *Kabbalah* of Rabbi Ishaq Luria, originating under Muslim rule, and of which Bension was an adept, was controversial in the Jewish *umma* because Luria's *Kabbalah* appears strongly marked by anthropomorphisms about God, equating the Creator with the human form, a conception which the Jews, under Muslim spiritual influence since the time of Ibn Maimun, had decisively repudiated. The First Dubrovnik Interfaith Encounter of 28-29 September 2007, organized by the Center for Islamic Pluralism, the Universities of Zagreb and Halle, and the Jewish Community of Dubrovnik, had as its topic the first European disciple of the *Kabbalah* of Luria, Abraham Kohen Herrera (1570-1635). Herrera was introduced to Luria's new mystical doctrine in Ragusa. I have described the biography of the Dubrovčanin Kohen Herrera in my *Sarajevska Ruža*.[\[27\]](#)

The Dubrovnik Encounter, which we hope to continue as a permanent "Dubrovnik Platform" for philosophical and other intellectual dialogue at an exceptionally high and non-political level, included the *Manastirli* Jew Nissim Yosha. Dr. Yosha is a distinguished Israeli translator of Kohen Herrera (the only Kabbalist to write in standard Spanish rather than aramejski or Hebrew – the better to reach the Sephardic exiles with the message of Luria). Dr. Yosha stated that "Lurianic theosophy included embarrassing anthropomorphic formulations."[\[28\]](#)

Allegations of anthropomorphism appear to draw an unbridgeable gap between Sufism and *Kabbalah*, given the strict exclusion of comparison between the divine and the human form in Islam. An enlightening *fatwa* was delivered in 1914, under the aegis of the Zaydi ruler of Yemen, Imam Yahya Hamid al-Din (d. 1948), legitimizing the study of *Zohar* by the Jews, notwithstanding accusations of an impermissible and anthropomorphic *bida* advanced by anti-Kabbalist Jews.[\[29\]](#)

The story of this *fatwa* is remarkable in that it demonstrates that Muslim scholars of the early 20th century were no less interested and appreciative of Kabbalistic thought, and specifically of *Zohar*, as an individual like Rabbi Bension was of the genius of Ibn Arabi. Possibly at the order of the ruling imam himself, the *shariacourt* in Sana'a had summoned the Yemeni anti-*Kabbalah* faction along with the Kabbalist Chief Rabbi of the city, Yahya Ishaq, to a hearing in the imam's residence.

A Yemeni Jew later challenged the Zaydi imam for having refused to order the Kabbalists to abandon their beliefs, but the imam, who although a Shia was known for his tolerant and sympathetic attitude toward Sunnism, answered in line with the precedents of classical Islam, "Do you want me to coerce you in your beliefs? Coercion is never acceptable. If I were to coerce someone, I would coerce all of you into [following] the law of Muhammad."

Answering the claim that *Kabbalah* introduced anthropomorphism into Judaism, the Zaydi imam asked, "Doesn't the entire Torah speak in anthropomorphic language? Does it not say 'Israel is my first-born son' (*'Izrael je moj prvorodenac'*) [Ex. 4:22] and 'we shall make man in our image' (*'Načinimo čovjeka na svoju sliku'*) [Gen. 1:26]?" Finally, the imam determined, "these are all spiritual matters, not corporeal anthropomorphisms, and they are all 'esoteric matters'... that are spoken of here." He then addressed the anti-*Kabbalah* advocate and warned, "If you persist in asking such thick-headed questions like an uneducated man (God forbid!) it all becomes vanity and emptiness, your religion becomes nothing but vanity... and every person who is called a Hebrew will, God forbid, disappear. Know that if the words of the *Zohar* are not accepted then the Torah must follow and everything must be negated."[\[30\]](#) This is an exceptionally interesting defense of Jewish survival through the centuries, including the future, enunciated by a Shia ruler.

The incidents I have discussed here, involving a Sephardic Rabbi in Jerusalem and Manastir who admired Ibn Arabi, and a Zaydi Shia imam who appreciated the *Zohar*, represent the potential for fruitful interfaith dialogue, at the highest possible spiritual level, that we hope to sustain in the Dubrovnik Platform in the years to come.

Notes

[1] Maimonide, Obadia [Obadyah] and David, *Deux Traités de Mystique Juive*, tr. from Judeo-Arabic with commentary by Paul B. Fenton, Lagrasse (France), Verdier, 1987.

[2] First edition in English: London, G. Routledge, 1932; second edition, New York, Sepher-Hermon Press, 1974. Translations apparently exist only in Spanish and Portuguese.

[3] Unamuno, Miguel de, "Prólogo," in Bension, Dr. Ariel, *El Zohar en la España Musulmana y Cristiana*, Ediciones Nuestra Raza, Madrid, 1934, p. 13.

[4] See Scholem, Gershom, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, First ed., Jerusalem, Schocken, 1941; rev. ed., New York, Schocken, 1946. On Rabbi Bension's 1925 text, titled *Hillul*, and its appeal to Scholem, see Meir, Jonatan, "The Imagined Decline of Kabbalah: The Kabbalistic Yeshiva Sha'ar ha-Shamayim and Kabbalah in Jerusalem in the Beginning of the Twentieth Century" in Huss, Boaz, Pasi, Marco, and Von Stuckrad, Kocku, eds., *Kabbalah and Modernity*, Leiden & Boston, Brill, 2010.

[5] Aranov, Saul I., *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Bension Collection of Sephardic Manuscripts and Texts*, Edmonton, University of Alberta Press, 1979.

[6] Bension, *The Zohar in Moslem and Christian Spain*, p. 245, as cited in Aranov, p. xiii.

[7] See Elsie, Robert, *A Short History of Albanian Literature*, London, I.B. Tauris, 2005.

[8] Plotnik, Leonard, "The Sephardim of New Lots," *Commentary* [New York], January 1958, pp. 28-35.

[9] Lebel, Jennie, *Tide and Wreck: History of the Jews of Vardar Macedonia*, Bergenfield, New Jersey [USA], Avotaynu, 2008, p. 138.

[10] Cohen, Mark, *Last Century of a Sephardic Community: The Jews of Monastir, 1839-1943*, New York, Foundation for the Advancement of Sephardic Studies and Culture, 2003, pp. 120-124.

[11] Schwartz, Stephen, *Sarajevska Ruža: Biljeske o Jevrejima na Balkanu*, Sarajevo, Tugra, 2006, pp. 30-31.

[12] Luria, Max A., "A Study of the Monastir Dialect of Judeo-Spanish Based on Oral Material Collected in Monastir, Yugoslavia," [New York and Paris], *Revue Hispanique*, LXXIX, 1930, pp. 323-583.

[13] Luria, op. cit., p. 6.

[14] Ibid, pp. 29-30.

[15] Ibid, p. 233.

[16] Ibid, p. 225. It should be noted that a more complete volume on Judeo-Spanish linguistics in Bucharest, Selanik, Manastir, and Skopje, with mention of Kalmi Baruh and other important scholars, is Crews, Cynthia M., *Recherches sur le Judéo-Espagnol dans les Pays Balkaniques*, Paris, Droz, 1935.

[17] See Baruch, Nir, ed., *Annihilation and Survival in United Bulgaria 1943*, Association for Research and Commemoration of the Jewish Communities in the Balkans, Israel, 2003.

[18] See, in particular, Idel, Moshe, *Studies in Ecstatic Kabbalah*, Albany, State University of New York Press, 1988.

[19] See Baruh, Kalmi, "Islame Burimet të *Komedisë Hujnore* të Dantes," tr. Hatipi Tajar, [Prishtina], *Fjala* II, 1969, pp. 14-15.

[20] Bension, op. cit., p.40

[21] Algar, Hamid, "Hadith in Sufism," *Encyclopedia Iranica*, New York, Columbia University, online edition 2006.

[22] Bension, op. cit., p. 34.

[23] Ibid., p. 40.

[24] Ibid, p. 49.

[25] Ibid, p. 61.

[26] Ibid, p. 45.

[27] Schwartz, op. cit., pp. 182-219.

[28] Yosha, Nissim, "Herrera's Philosophical interpretation of Lurianic Kabbalah and Sarug's role in Herrera's thinking," delivered at the First Dubrovnik Interfaith Encounter, 28-29 September 2007, to appear in a volume of conference papers.

[29] Wagner, Mark S., "Jewish Mysticism on Trial in a Muslim Court: A Fatwa on the Zohar – Yemen 1914," *Die Welt des Islams* [Leiden], 2, 2007, pp. 207-31.

[30] Ibid, p. 217.